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ABSTRACT

THIS SUMMARY ON STUDIES ON PRESCHOOL INTERVENTION THROUGH SOCIAL LEARNING INDICATE THAT A CHILD'S MODE OF ORIENTATION AND HIS GENERAL LEVEL OF CCMPETENCE AND MATURITY ARE, IN LARGE PART, DERIVED FROM HIS SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT. TO THE EXTENT THAT SPECIFIC ASPECTS OF THAT ENVIRCNMENT CAN BE IDENTIFIED AS SIGNIFICANT ANTECEDENTS TO BEHAVIORAL INADEQUACIES, REMEDIAL EFFORTS SHOULD CONCERN THEMSELVES WITH THOSE ASPECTS. DISADVANTAGED BOYS FROM FATHER-ABSENT HOMES EXHIBIT A LOW LEVEL OF MATURITY IN THEIR COGNITIVE, AFFECTIVE, AND BEHAVICRAL PROCESSES. YET, WHILE THIS IMMATURITY SEEMS CLEARLY TO SPRING FROM SOCIAL FACTORS, PRESCHOOLS HAVE TRADITICNALLY STRESSED SCHOOL READINESS SKILLS. THE PROBLEMS EXPERIENCED BY DISADVANTAGED BOYS SEEMED TO BE CAUSED BY A COMBINATION OF (1) PATERNAL ABSENCE, (2) LACK OF APPROPRIATE MASCULINE MODEL, AND (3) LCW SOCIAL ESTEEM OF THE MALE AND MALE ROLE. REMEDIATION SEEMS TC REQUIRE AT LEAST (1) A COMPETENT MASCULINE MODEL, (2) VARIED CHILD-MCDEL INTERACTION, AND (3) REINFORCEMENT OF THE BOY'S IMITATING BEHAVIOR. THE PRESENCE OF THESE CONDITIONS IN A COORDINATED SOCIAL-LEARNING PROGRAM YIELDED SIGNIFICANT INTELLECTUAL AND EMOTIONAL GAINS. SOCIAL-LEARNING TECHNIQUES CAN BE USED TO SUPPLEMENT PROGRAMS WITH SPECIFIC ENRICHMENT GOALS, AND MAY ALSO BE USED TO BROADEN THE RANGE OF THE ADVANTAGED AS WELL AS THE DISADVANTAGED. (MH)

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PRESCHOOL INTERVENTION THROUGH SOCIAL LEARNING[1]

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A child is more than a wired box, a windup toy, or a logico-linguistic automaton to be repaired or reconditioned if defective. He is, all at once, problem-solver, actor, and urchin. His performance reciprocally affects and is affected by rapport (Zigler & Butterfield, 1968), personal style (Hertzig et al., 1968), self-image (Wattenberg & Clifford, 1964), and motive orientation (Kagan & Moss, 1962). The child is a person for whom other people are very important.

The social factors which condition problem-solving behavior derive, in part, from the child's own capacity to evoke characteristic interpersonal responses and, in part, from the environment itself (Bell, 1968). The role of the environment, particularly the impact of significant others, is an age-dependent variable. The overt behavior and implicit values of these significant others eventually exercise a profound effect upon the child's mode of orientation, evaluation, and action.

Sex Differences in Psycho-emotional Development among Disadvantaged Children in Three Intervention Groups

The concept of economic-cultural disadvantage identifies a matrix of interdependent antecedents and consequents. The antecedents include poor health care, inadequate nutrition, crowding, financial exploitation, social ridicule, and a host of more specific factors. These antecedents facilitate

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familial disruption and personal defeat which ramify in self-generating succession.

Among the urban poor, particularly Negro ghetto males, the psychoemotional consequences are profound. Often a style of life predicated upon short-term interest, exhibitionism, and destructive exploitation emerges (Liebow, 1968; Moynihan & Barton, 1965). The relative intellectual, motivational, and emotional deficit of disadvantaged Negro males is apparent in early childhood and becomes more pronounced with age (Deutsch, 1960). Sex differences in achievement occur among Southern as well as Northern Negroes and at every socioeconomic level (Kennedy, Van de Riet, & White, 1963).

Bronfenbrenner (1967), in a recent position paper, stresses the high incidence of non-intact homes and father absence among the Negro poor as one sufficient condition of subsequent male debility. He argues with Pettigrew that,

> . . .father-deprived boys are markedly more immature, submissive, dependent, and effeminate than other boys. . . . As they grow older, this passive behavior may continue, but more typically, it is vigorously overcompensated for by exaggerated masculinity. Juvenile gangs, white and Negro, classically act out this pseudomasculinity with leather jackets, harsh language, and physical "toughness" (Pettigrew, 1964, p. 18).

Father absence is one end of a continuum of varying degrees of paternal participation in the family. As of the 1960 census, approximately 20% of

Negro families were missing the male parent. A far larger proportion may be assumed to be only nominally present.

In spite of such evidence, studies of preschool intervention among the disadvantaged generally stress the acquisition of cognitive and language skills and, to a greater or lesser extent, ignore social learning factors in development. Current intervention programs are usually oriented to some variant of "school readiness," that is, achievement, psycho-linguistic abilities, or intelligence. Curricula, games, reinforcements, etc., are devised which relate more or less directly to the school readiness goal. The psycho-emotional aspects of individual adaptability are assumed to be peripheral or self-correcting with the attainment of skills and the experience of school success. If this assumption holds, then sex differences among disadvantaged children in school readiness oriented programs should roughly correspond to sex differences in achievement. When achievement differences are minimal, psycho-emotional differences should be minimal.

This hypothesis was tested among a total of 56 six-year-old subjects enrolled in one of three intervention groups at the University of Illinois. All children had completed the equivalent of four semesters in either a "Direct Verbal Learning" program, a "highly structured" academically oriented program, or a "traditional" nursery school designated as a control group (Bereiter & Engelman, 1966; Karnes et. al., 1968). The children in the experimental groups had made impressive gains in various measures of intelligence and achievement although these gains declined markedly one year

after treatment (Karnes et al., 1969). No sex differences within any group for these measures were reported.

The children in the three groups were administered the Ego-Ideal Interview and evaluated for level of ego development (Van den Daele, 1968a, 1968b). The interview explores the child's goals, his reasons for these goals, and his understanding of the means to obtain them. The modes of response to this task are ordered in an invariant developmental sequence (Van den Daele, 1969a).

Among middle class children, identification with an appropriately sexed model is associated with a significant transformation of preferences, values, and the general organization of motives around five years of age. An orientation to immediate gratification and general excitation is displaced by a "good little boy or girl" mentality patterned primarily after the behavior and expectations of the same-sexed parent or parent substitute The more immature child usually selects behaviors associated with the spectacular and flamboyant and justifies these choices wholly in terms of the actions which define the behavior, "[I would like to be] a race car. . . . Race car go emmmm [subject acts out the driving of a race car with related descriptive patter]." The child who has obtained identification chooses behavior derived from the same-sexed parent and, although actions still define the choice, the child justifies his choice by reference to naive concepts of good and bad, nice and not nice, etc., "I want to be a business man. . . . My dad is. . . . He's nice. . . . I want to be nice too." The ubiquitous role of the male parent among the disadvantaged suggests this change in motive structure is absent or delayed among preschool disadvantaged males.

This implication was clearly confirmed. Differences among the three intervention groups for level of ego development were insignificant (P = .50 to .60 for largest t), but within all groups, males were evaluated as more immature than females. When groups were pooled, this difference was highly significant ($P < .005$). One out of three of these six-year-old disadvantaged males responded in a way characteristic of four-year-old middle class males while ego level for disadvantaged females did not differ from middle class norms. Whatever the impact of the intervention programs for the short-term test-taking proficiency of the children, the psycho-emotional development of a significant portion of males appeared relatively unaffected.

Sex Differences in Ego Development among Negro and Caucasian School Children

If identification and imitative learning are in fact crucial factors in ego development, then not only school readiness programs, but school itself, may be largely irrelevant to the problems of Negro male identity. Typically, school teachers, tasks, and expectations are feminine or feminine-oriented. Children apprehend this and, from the first grade on, evaluate chalk, blackboards, books, and other educational implementia as non-masculine. Too often, adult males are simply not associated with early experiences of education, and when available are often cast in a role already defined by the children as feminine.

Like the various school readiness programs, traditional curriculum models disregard or ignore sex-typing and sex-role identity in male problem-solving and goal orientation. Typical curricula assume that the

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acquisition of skills judged relevant to later school tasks are both self-reinforcing and therapeutic. From this perspective, sex differences should converge with time, or, at the very least, the relative deficit of males should not increase.

This assertion was evaluated in a study of 62 second-, fourth-, sixth-, and eighth-grade Negro children, distributed in approximately equal age and sex groups, enrolled in integrated schools. All Ss were administered the Ego-Ideal Interview and these responses tape-recorded for later transcription. Seventy-two Caucasian, middle class children served as a contrast group. The responses of these groups were evaluated for ego development and level of aspiration.

The ego development of Negro males through the eighth grade was markedly immature. Although, on the whole, Negro females were somewhat less mature than the Caucasian group through the sixth grade, this difference was minimal by the eighth grade. In contrast, eighth-grade Negro males were not significantly different from the second-grade Caucasian group or the fourth-grade Negro group. In a literal sense, Negro male ego development appeared fixated. Decision-making strategies were usually predicated upon dichotomous thinking, conflict avoidance, or pursuit of concrete, immediate ends. Few Negro males evidenced an appreciation of peer group norms or more general social expectations characteristic of mature modes of decision-making. Goal choices were divided between the unrealistic and the menial. With age Negro male aspirations became more vague, ill-defined, and uncertain while the status of occupational choice progressively declined (Figure 1).

Insert Figure 1 about here

The protocols of the Negro males reveal that the social role of males was almost entirely conceived in negative terms: "[Fathers shouldn't] be sitting around and not making money (Robert, fourth grade)." "Don't stay out and go out and drink [for parents to be proud] (John, sixth grade)." [Be a good parent] so principal won't get after me (Richard, eighth grade)." Moreover, the implications of occupational choice were often only vaguely appreciated if at all: "[A plumber] puts handles on the doors, on both sides (Edward, second grade)." "[To play the drums], get a good [college] education (Gary, sixth grade)." Sometimes occupational choices were superficially grandiose: "Working for the University" meant "washing dishes," and "Creative work" was "shop like I take in school."

In contrast to Caucasian males, identification with a male model among Negroes (whether parent or parent substitute) did not eventuate in a set of articulate means-ends rules and a sense of self-esteem and purpose. Rather, modes of thinking related to identification often appeared truncated, inarticulate, and conflict-laden. Although paternal absence may be a sufficient explanation of identificatory conflict, identificatory conflict was characteristic of Negro males generally, not just father absent Negro males.

This implies that father absence is only one symptom of a syndrome of interrelated factors which relate to ego disorganization. If the status aspirations of young Negroes are characteristic of adult Negroes, then a significant status aspiration gulf occurs between adult Negro males and females. This gulf may generate significant familial discord. Status expectations and goals are simply not shared. Since the preponderance of Negro adult males do in fact hold low status positions, expectations appear congruent with reality: The male is "lazy," "a no-good," or "just don't

care." The adult Negro female may thus generalize her disappointments to her sons. Her expectations become largely negative. The child is caught in the classic double bind. His approximations to adult male behavior as modeled by the father or paternal substitute are non-verified or met with negative evaluation.

The Horatio Alger model of self-improvement through better education seems relatively tangential to the profound motivational and ego deficits evidenced by Negro male children. The educational experience of disadvantaged males does not appear to provide new goals or even redefinition of old ones. Whether education, in the usual sense, can provide these goals or the decision-making principles to support them is questionable. The fundamental problem of the Negro disadvantaged appears to be social-psychological, not primarily perceptual-cognitive.

A Social Learning Program for Low-income Children

The amelioration of male ego immaturity suggests a comprehensive interpersonal approach. Treatment implies either transformation of the home environment through therapy and reeducation or the construction of a program which approximates the interpersonal structure and dynamics which appear essential to early ego development.

Early identity formation is clearly linked to identification and imitative learning. Identity is not a conditioned response, it is a coordinated pattern of valuing, thinking, and behaving. The establishment of this pattern is most economically provided through interaction with a competent, appropriately sexed adult model. Interaction, however, is not

a sufficient condition for the development of identity. The interaction must provide a sample of the multiple roles which constitute expected behavior. The exposure to a variety of roles provides the child with a repertoire of alternative behaviors to meet various situations and establishes the experiential base antecedent to the derivation of more general values. This learning, like all classes of learning, requires that the child's imitative approximations are rewarded, or, at least, effect some pragmatic or adaptive gain to the child. A treatment program oriented to the disadvantaged male, derived from these assertions, must meet at least three conditions: (a) A male serve as the model for behavior; (b) the model engage in multiple roles with the child; and (c) the child's imitative behaviors are esteemed.

These treatment conditions were the basis of a coordinated social-learning program first explored in the Fall and Spring of 1967-1968 among sixteen children from low income families. The children were divided into two groups of three-and-four-year-olds, and these groups were completely balanced for sex, race, and paternal absence or presence. All children were enrolled in a day care center subsidized by community funds. The median income per family was less than 250 dollars per month.

The first condition of the treatment was met by assigning a male model to each group. One male was Negro and the other, Caucasian. These males engaged in both informal and formal interaction with the children in their groups and augmented the regular female, day care staff.

Since the disadvantaged child's perception of adult males is often ambivalent, the following strategies were implemented to enhance the status of the male models. First, the regular day care staff deferred to model

initiated activities. Second, models were provided with a variety of attractive materials. The materials were usually appealing mechanical or scientific objects such as prisms, magnets, tape recorders, telescopes, and microscopes which provided an opportunity for many child-model coparticipant tasks. The models introduced these materials, and subsequently controlled and regulated their use.

The second treatment condition, multiple role interaction, was provided through an array of role-play activities designed for young children. In the formal sense, role play described the participation of a male model and a few children in some formalized set of behaviors. Since the treatment program was oriented to disadvantaged males, the male model generally took the role of some male-oriented profession or occupation coordinating his actions with the appropriate objects or tools and, subsequently, invited the child to take his turn. The models took the roles of a mailman, a policeman, a fireman, a scientist, a doctor, etc. Such roles were usually short and generally schematic in content to portray the essential elements of the occupation. The third condition of the treatment program was met through verbal approval of the child's imitative behavior and role play by models and female staff.

The treatment program continued for 25 weeks during which each model interacted with his group two hours per day, three days per week. At the conclusion of twelve weeks, the models changed groups, so the children were exposed to a model of a different race and temperament. The change-over was intended to yield information concerning satiation effects, if any, and the role of racial similarity in identificatory learning.

The Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test (PPVT), selected cards from the Children's Apperception Test (CAT), and the Ego-Ideal Interview (EII) were administered to the children from the first week at approximately five week intervals for the duration of the study. Three children dropped out during treatment due to change of residence or maternal unemployment. Thus, the reduced sample size for the 25 week period was 13. During the week following the conclusion of treatment, nine of these children, who had evaded an invasion of the measels, were administered the Stanford Binet Intelligence Test.

The mean PPVT IQ at the first test period was 92.6 for females and 92.8 for males, a mean somewhat above average for low income children in the Urbana area, but expected in view of the minimum ten week experience of subjects in the day-care center prior to treatment. The mean PPVT IQ at the final test period was 115.3 for females and 125.8 for males which represented an average gain of 27.3 points. Average PPVT IQ declined after the exchange of models for six of the seven father absent children and one of the six father present children (Figure 2). This decline was more dramatic for father absent males with a mean loss of 16 points than father absent females with a mean loss of 5 points.

Insert Figure 2 about here

The mean Binet IQ for the nine children administered the test during the last week was 116.5 and the mean PPVT IQ for the same children was 117.1. The PPVT usually under-estimates Binet IQ by 6 to 9 points for children in the IQ range of children in this study (Di Lorenzo & Brady,

1968). If Binet IQ is extrapolated from the initial PPVT IQ, the best estimate of average Binet IQ gain is approximately 18 points. The final mean PPVT IQ is higher than expected probably as a consequence of practice effects due to repeated measures.

The CAT cards were selected to sample the child's emotional response toward powerful, generally masculine figures. Oral agressive fantasies predominated. Early in treatment, the smaller, weaker animal was usually the target for destruction, but later in treatment both larger and smaller animals were reciprocally punished. This transition was exemplified by Virginia, a three year old, Caucasian, father present female. At the first session, Virginia responded, "[That is] a tiger. . ... He'll eat the monkey." At the final session, she recanted, "The tiger is going to eat the monkey, then the monkey is going to eat the tiger." In some cases, oral agressive acts toward animals were wholly displaced. Mary, a four year old, Caucasian, father absent female, initially interpreted the same card in the same way as Virginia, ". . . lion is after the monkey to eat him up." Ten weeks later she responded, ". . . Monkey ran away to get tiger a cookie [and] came back to feed tiger."

Following content analyses, the CAT responses of each child by treatment period were rank ordered for verbal output and fantasy elaboration. Although the rank order of response complexity generally conformed to the order of testing, the responses of 11 out of 13 children following model change were evaluated as below the median for response complexity, that is, model change was associated with a significant decline in verbal output.

The model EEI responses of children during treatment progressed from principles derived from immediate gratification and general excitation to

parental identification. This transformation was more marked for males than females who at the beginning of the study were evaluated as significantly more immature than females. At the conclusion of the study, sex differences were minimal, and, although somewhat accelerated, the final distribution of ego strategies did not differ significantly from norms for middle class three- and four-year-old children.

A representative case of change of decision-making strategy was Richard, a four year old, Caucasian, father absent child. At the first interview, Richard chose as work, "to color. . . at Church," and as a view outside his window, "a tornado [tǫ] blow trees down, [tǫ] break teees." He was incredulous whether or not he would be a father, "Are you kidding?" At the final interview, Richard chose, "to build houses. . . for me and my Mommy and other people," and as a view, "other houses." As a father, he chose to be "A man . . . like my Grandaddy." Richard thus relinquished rather infantile goals for masculine related, socially appropriate choices.

At the time of model change, three children, two of whom were father absent, returned to somewhat more immature modes of decision-making. This result appears noteworthy since prior to model change, ego ratings were either improved or stable from test period to test period.

The review of these results suggests that the Social Learning Program is a powerful method of early childhood intervention. Imitative learning is multiple learning which encompasses the relation of the self to others and, thereby, involves motives, skills, and values. Treatment was associated with significant cognitive, affective, and ego gains. Since the treatment was oriented to male imitative learning, these gains, as anticipated, were more marked for males than females.

Unanticipated, however, were the disruptive effects of model change for the children in general, and father absent children in particular. The informal observations of the day care center staff indicated that during the week following model change, the children were variously dependent, aggressive, and emotionally volatile. They behaved as new arrivals. Tests were administered approximately three weeks after the children had reoriented to routine. If the tests had been administered earlier, the children's retrograde performance would likely have been more dramatic.

In retrospect, the regressive impact of model change seems intelligible, if not predictable. The children, particularly the father absent children, had developed strong attachments to their model. When the model left for no apparent reason, the children were, in the psychological sense, abandoned. The depressing effect of model change is the experimental analogue of Bayley's naturalistic observations of the impact of familial disorganization upon intellectual performance (Bayley & Oden, 1955). What affects the person emotionally, affects him cognitively. In a sense, the manipulation of the interpersonal environment to facilitate identification and imitative learning succeeded too well.

The effect of abrupt model change implied the necessity of "desensitization" prior to final separation. The children manifested few regressive behaviors prior to vacations, natural separations which they anticipated. Hence, prior to the conclusion of the study, the children were prepared through explanation and reassurance. The children appeared to make the transition to normal routine without complication.

The results of this study are broadly supportive of the earlier assertions which concern the ego development of the disadvantaged. These low

income children, particularly male and father absent children, appeared to be the victims of an interpersonal situation which failed to provide the necessary conditions antecedent to identification. When these conditions were provided, the children through imitative learning and reward, derived substantive cognitive, emotional, and ego gains.

A Social Learning Program for Middle Income Children

Social learning technique is potentially applicable to children from all socioeconomic strata. The method may be modified, augmented, or extended as the needs of the subject population require. The program may be designed to serve some relatively general therapeutic aim, e.g., ego development and identity formation or some specific end, e.g., the modification of particular preferences (Van den Daele, 1969b).

The goals of young children who have obtained identification generally reflect the manifest content of parental choices, or, at least, what the child understands as parental choices. The child apprehends these choices in terms of concrete behaviors. A mother cooks, sews, calls the children, etc.; a father goes to work, comes home, reads, etc. The child construes his goals in terms of actions which he has observed and perhaps acted out. In general, parental choices constitute the limits for the child's choices. In a homogeneous socioeconomic group, children's goals are relatively stereotyped. Whether this is adaptive depends upon the needs and abilities of the child. Not all children can be football players or electrical engineers. Since children's goal choices are generally construed in action terms, social learning technique, as an action-oriented method, is implicated as a technique of goal diversification.

A program of role enrichment, derived from social learning principles, was explored during an eight week summer preschool session among 40 middle class children, The children, three through five years old, were divided into two groups balanced for age and sex. At the onset and conclusion of the program, each child was administered the Occupational Preference Picture Inventory (Van den Daele, 1969c). The OPPI is a set of 16 cards which depict representative masculine and feminine occupations for a range of socioeconomic classification. The OPPI yields information concerning the general hierarchy of children's preferences. For purposes of this study, 15 pair comparisons were obtained at four levels of preference. The 16 cards of the test were paired with one another to yield eight choices. These, in turn, were compared to yield four choices, then two, and finally one. Since cards were randomized at each level of comparison, the percentage of choice for an occupation at each level may be assumed to reflect the relative strength of that choice within groups. After pretest, two sets of three occupations low in popularity, were selected from the OPPI as target occupations for role play. These included a judge, a librarian, and a telephone lineman for one group, and a cashier, a doctor, and a gas station attendant for the other group.

At the beginning of each week within each group, one of the target roles was introduced. An occupational setting, corresponding to the role, was constructed from an array of occupationally related materials. These settings were made as realistic as possible within the resources of the preschool staff. This requirement sometimes necessitated the introduction of relatively non-typical preschool equipment. For example, the setting for the judge role was patterned after a mock court which included a

witness stand, and judge's bench, a gavel, and a black robe.

Within the appropriate occupational setting, the target role was modeled by a male or female from the preschool staff with a small group of children. Each child was invited to take the role, "Now it's your turn to be a librarian," etc. The child's derivative role play was monitored and the child's approximations corrected and verified through questions, demonstrations, and verbal reinforcement, e.g., "Is that where a doctor would listen to the heart? . . . A doctor asks the patient to be still. . . . That's the way it's done," etc.

The modeling experience was followed by various group activities intended to support and augment the children's role comprehension. The children made field trips to visit a jury room, a library, a store to visit a cashier, and a gas station. They met with a librarian and a lawyer who described their occupations and answered questions. They listened to occupationally related stories, e.g., "How the Doctor Mended the Broken Leg," and observed various picture displays related to the target role.

The program was organized so that the children's exposure to a particular role setting, role and role-related activity or activities occurred within a one week period. At the conclusion of each week, the role setting was dismantled and role materials removed from the children's access. This procedure was implemented to equate in so far as possible the children's free play role participation for the target occupations. Since three occupations were assigned to each group, three weeks were required for the formal program. During the fourth week, two days prior to the final OPPI evaluation, the occupational roles were reenacted to facilitate recall of earlier role play.

Since two groups were included in the study and each group was assigned a different set of occupations, one group served as the control for the other. Within each group, pre- and post-treatment difference scores were computed for the modeled and non-modeled target roles at each level of comparison. At all levels, the mean preference scores for modeled occupations increased, and the mean preference scores for non-modeled target occupations decreased. Although at pretest the modeled and non-modeled target occupations were selected with approximately equal frequency, at post-test, the modeled occupations were selected, on the average, three times more often than the non-modeled target occupations. The social learning program thus effected changes in the hierarchy as well as the final distribution of occupational preference within and between groups.

The change of occupational preference associated with social learning derives from the child's active engagement in a role. Social learning implies a non-trivial change of orientation. The role serves as a net, a schemata, a framework of the child's actions and choices. The child seeks to act out the role and coordinate to it new actions.

Formal role play during the social learning program was followed by a number of children-initiated, derivative behaviors. The children spontaneously engaged in the replication of target roles and monitored one another. Competency through the proper performance of the role was a common theme. One five year old remarked to another during doctor play, "Don't be so rough. A doctor is more gentle than that. . . ."

From time to time, small groups of children invited an adult staff member to monitor and elaborate occupational behavior for a target role beyond that provided during the formal role-play sessions. In conjunction

with this behavior the children often requested more information about certain aspects of the role. The children's play of the cashier occupation led to supplementary, although informal, role play of a custome, and later, a bank teller. The role thus served as the basis for cooperative adult-child interaction for a variety of situations.

The derivative role was not stereotyped, but imaginative. Target roles were coordinated by the child to his needs and experiences. One five-year-old male translated the cashier role to an insurance salesman. Although discrete occupations, "Both collect money." A familiar role provided a set of behaviors for a relatively unfamiliar, but more masculine occupation which the child associated with his father who was a businessman.

These observations suggest that the social-learning program served as a general catalyst to the children's cooperative and imaginative behavior. The technique provided a set of actions and expectancies for cooperative play and reciprocal interaction. Role play was not entirely a private experience, but a public action subject to verification and correction. When the children monitored one another's role play and sought out additional role elaborations, they practiced not only a role, but engaged in the consensual process antecedent to mature modes of behavior.

Summary

The child's mode of orientation and problem-solving strategies, his relative competence or ineptitude, derive, in large measure, from his social environment. Disadvantaged males in general and father absent males in particular manifest a common syndrome of cognitive, affective, and behavioral

immaturity. Although the genesis of this syndrome appears dependent on social factors, preschool intervention programs usually stress school readiness skills. The attainment of school success is assumed to be both socially and emotionally therapeutic. Nevertheless, disadvantaged males enrolled in selected school readiness programs remained markedly immature in modes of thinking antecedent to masculine identity. Later decision-making strategies of school age, disadvantaged males were generally superficial, fragmented, and often unrealistic while the general level of aspiration progressively declined. Neither school readiness programs nor school itself seemed to provide the necessary conditions for eventual cognitive-affective maturity.

The ego debilities of the disadvantaged male appear to derive from one or more of the following factors: (a) Paternal absence, (b) deficit of masculine, socially appropriate modeled behaviors, and (c) low social esteem of the male and male role. A treatment program oriented to the establishment of socially adaptive modes of thinking requires the transformation of the social environment to facilitate identification and imitative learning. At least three conditions are implied: (a) The availability of a competent male model, (b) varied child-model interaction, and (c) esteem or reward of the child's imitative approximations to the model's behavior. When these conditions were met through a coordinated social-learning program, disadvantaged children obtained significant intellectual and emotional gains.

Social-learning techniques may subserve specific enrichment goals as well as such general therapeutic aims, and hence may serve the advantaged as well as the disadvantaged. The interpersonal experience of middle class

children is often homogeneous and their range of preferences, relatively constricted. When this experience was augmented through a program of role enrichment, children in the program displayed new preferences, novel modes of fantasy and play behavior, and enhanced cooperative interaction.

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Footnotes

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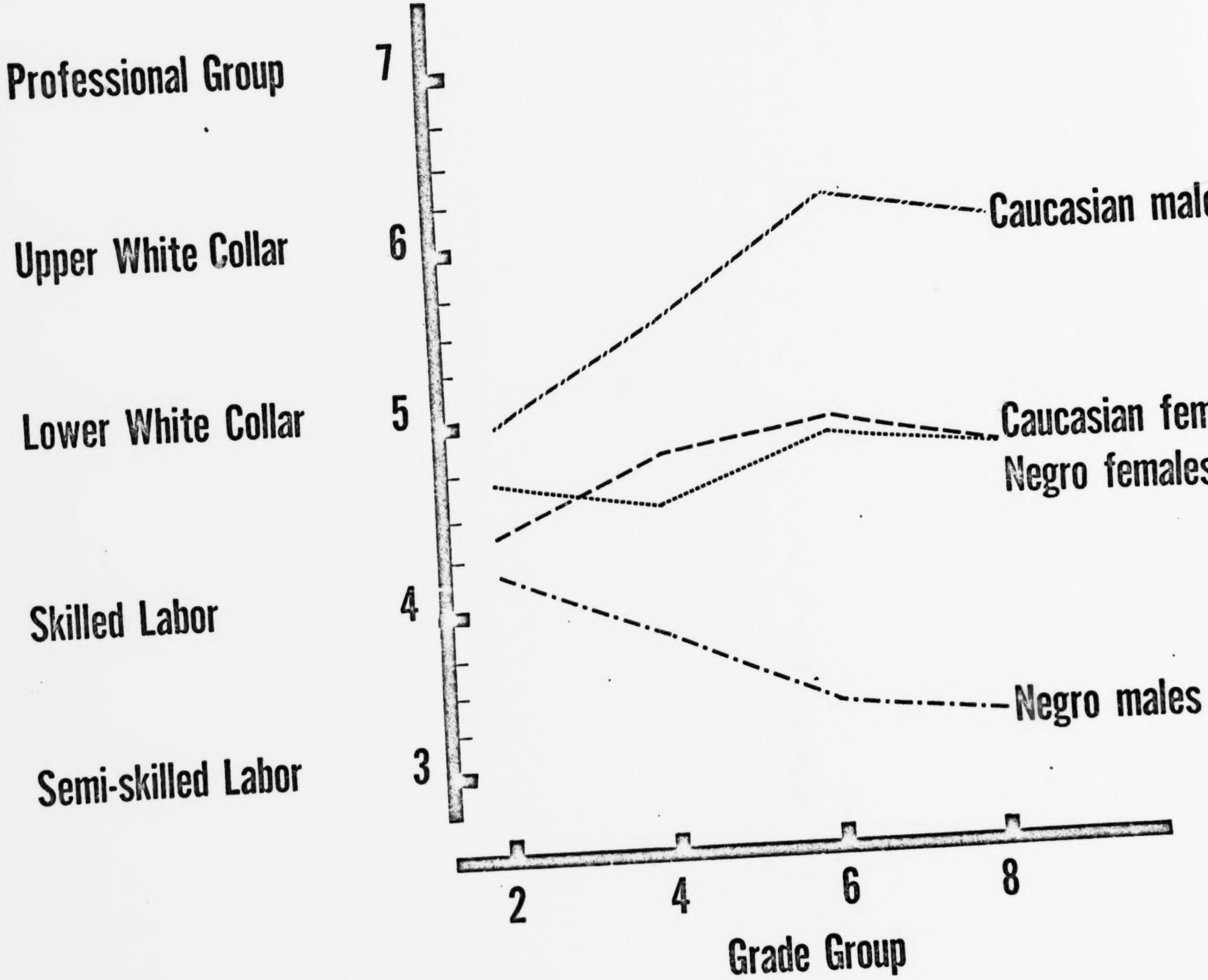
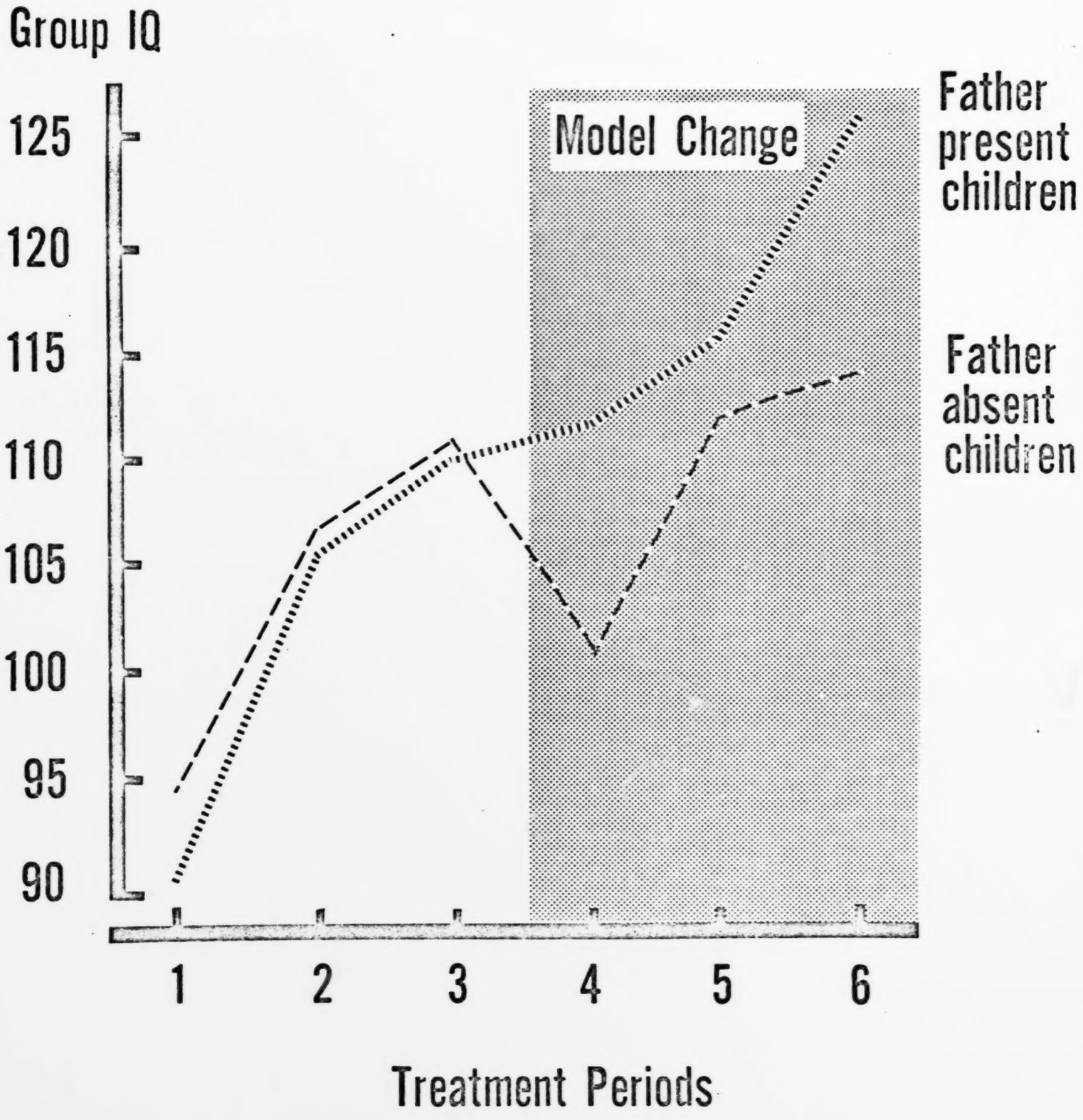
Figure Captions

Figure 1. Mean Occupational Aspiration of Negro and Caucasian Males and Females for Four Grade Groups.

Figure 2. Mean PPVT IQ for Father Present and Father Absent Low Income Children during the Social-Learning Program. The IQ decline occurs with model change, not prior to model change.


Professional Group
Upper White Collar
Lower White Collar
Skilled Labor
Semi-skilled Labor
7
6
5
4
3
Caucasian males
Caucasian females
Negro females
Negro males
2
4
6
8
Grade Group


Group IQ
125
120
115
110
105
100
95
90
Model Change
Father present children
Father absent children
1
2
3
4
5
6
Treatment Periods